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ABSTRACT

As part of efforts to improve school readiness by enhancing the quality of early childhood education, the state of Maryland developed standards for the use of staff in center-based child care and Head Start programs to mirror the standards in place for public school prekindergarten programs as well as a state accreditation process for center-based child care and Head Start programs. This document is comprised of a guide to accreditation and an instrument for self-appraisal and validation. The guide to accreditation provides information on the accreditation process, including implementation of the self-appraisal process; documentation of standards related to program administration, program operation, and home-school-community partnerships; and information on the validation process, including the validation visit and receipt of the validation decision. Appended is an overview of the accreditation process, including self-appraisal and validation, relevant forms, answers to frequently-asked questions about the standards and accreditation, and a glossary of relevant terms. The instrument for self-appraisal and validation is used by the program and by the validator team to rate the program's implementation of standards for program administration (mission statement, personnel, program continuity, and program accountability), program operation (environment, care and learning opportunities or curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and home-school-community partnerships. The instrument lists indicators rated on a 3-point scale (not met, partially met, or fully met) for the extent to which the indicator is in place. These indicators are linked to NAEYC standards and to Head Start program performance standards. (KB)

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Maryland State Department of Education

September 2000

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STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTING QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Center-based Child Care and Head Start

GUIDE TO ACCREDITATION: SELF-APPRAISAL AND VALIDATION

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Standards for Quality Early Childhood Education Programs for Center-based Child Care and Head Start Programs

BACKGROUND

Maryland started the millennium with legislation to improve school readiness by strengthening early childhood education. One of the major features of the legislation entitled **Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Education Enhancement Program** was the establishment of an **Early Childhood Accreditation Project** at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The Governor provided funding to support early childhood education programs in their efforts to improve their services to meet either national or state program accreditation standards. These program standards exceed the existing state child care licensing requirements. They are focused on the administrative, curricular, instructional, and family- and community-oriented aspects of high quality early childhood education programs.

The General Assembly has established direct monetary incentives for early childhood education programs to proceed with either national or state program accreditation. This document, ***Guide to Accreditation: Self-Appraisal and Validation***, refers to the *state's* accreditation process.

The Early Childhood Accreditation Project relies on research indicating that a high degree of quality at early childhood education programs has a long-term positive effect on children's school readiness and later school success. The ***Carolina Abecederain Project***, a carefully controlled longitudinal study released in February 2000, provides compelling evidence that high-quality early childhood education programs have a significant, long-term, positive effect on skill development and academic success. The ***Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study***, conducted by a consortium of researchers from UCLA, Yale, Universities of Colorado and North Carolina, suggests that children from high-quality early childhood education programs continue to score higher on cognitive and social skill measures through grade 2.

The first activity of the Early Childhood Accreditation Project was the development of ***Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start***. These standards mirror the ones from MSDE's ***Standards for Implementing Quality Early Learning Programs for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten*** which were issued by MSDE in 1998 and have been used extensively by public school programs. The ten standards are focused on program administration (mission, personnel, continuity, accountability), program operation (learning environment, curriculum, instruction, assessment), and home-school-community partnership. An additional standard (care and learning opportunities) has been added for programs serving infants and toddlers.

By developing the new standards for center-based child care and Head Start programs, MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project established an evaluation process for early childhood education programs that would be compatible with programs in both public school- and non public school settings. Thus each program, regardless of its setting, that has successfully completed program accreditation can claim to provide a level of quality that is equal to that provided by all other accredited programs.

INTRODUCTION

Head Start and center-based child care programs are designed to bestow immediate and long-term benefits to the children they serve. Research suggests that only high-quality programs result in long-term benefits.

The elements of quality are manifested differently among different kinds of early childhood education programs serving children and families. Center-based child care programs typically provide services for children of working parents. They are regulated by the Maryland Department of Human Resources/Child Care administration (DHR/CCA) in the form of child care licensing requirements. Head Start programs over the past three decades have pursued their mission of providing comprehensive services to low-income children and are required to meet Federal program performance standards. The difference of purpose and implementation among programs should not conceal their common early childhood education goal: the implementation of best practices in early education to promote learning and school readiness.

These *Standards* reflect research-based early childhood education as it is intended for young children in any setting: public school, child care, or Head Start. The *Standards* are based on recently published curricular standards, guidelines and position statements (NAEYC, 1997; NAEYC/IRA, 1998; AAAS, 1998; NCTM, 2000; National Research Council, 2000).

Any program that uses these *Standards* and participates in the accreditation process has made a commitment to improve the performance of its early childhood education services. This commitment to program improvement is the driving force of the accreditation process.

PURPOSE

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs* for the use of staff in Maryland's center-based child care and Head Start programs. Public school early learning programs will continue to use the MSDE *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Learning Programs: Prekindergarten and Kindergarten.* These documents are the tools designed to guide staff through a systematic process of self-appraisal, program improvement, validation, and accreditation.

The *Standards* consist of three documents:

- ? ***Guide to Accreditation: Self-Appraisal and Validation***. The *Guide to Accreditation* provides directions on how to proceed with the accreditation.
- ? ***Standards for Implementing Quality Early Learning Programs – Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation***. The *Instrument to Self-Appraisal and Validation* is used to rate the program.
- ? ***Manual of Best Practices for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs***. The *Manual of Best Practices* describes each indicator in terms of practices which can be observed or documented.

The *Standards* identify three areas which support the development and maintenance of high quality programs. The three areas are:

- ? Program Administration
- ? Program Operation
- ? Home-School-Partnership

The *Guide to Accreditation: Self Appraisal and Validation* outlines both a self-appraisal process and a process for programs seeking validation from MSDE. These processes allow for consistent articulation among Maryland's early childhood professionals of the key elements of high quality programs.

THE SELF-APPRAISAL AND VALIDATION PROCESS

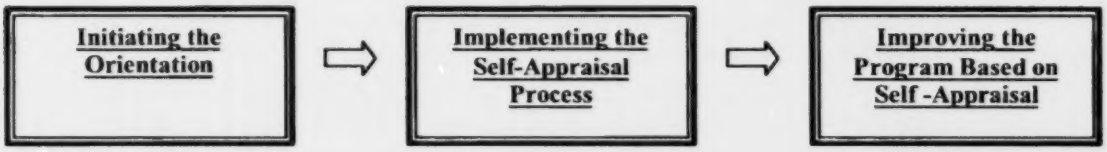
Definition

The accreditation process consists of two phases: self-appraisal and validation. Self-appraisal and validation are the processes through which early childhood education staff, with support from MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project, evaluate and modify their program(s). Any participating early childhood education program is subject to external review to publicly confirm that it has met high quality state standards for early childhood education programs. Early childhood programs have two (2) years from the date of initiation of the accreditation process to complete it. (Please note that the accreditation period for specific grant programs may be shorter).

The accreditation process is initiated by identifying the self-appraisal team and by establishing a timeline for completing the accreditation. The date of initiation of the accreditation process is established when an early childhood education program submits the **Early Childhood Accreditation Application** to MSDE. The date on which the application is received at MSDE is the determining date of initiation.

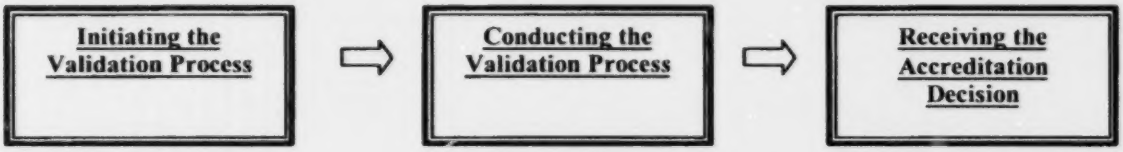
Phase I, Self-Appraisal, is a process that allows programs to reflect on the quality of their early childhood education services. During the self-appraisal phase, the program's self-appraisal team makes decisions about the nature and extent of the program improvement that will take place.

Phase I: Self-Appraisal Process



Phase II, Validation, is a process in which the program is officially acknowledged for attaining excellence in early childhood programming.

Phase II: Validation Process



IMPLEMENTING THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

(*See the chart in the Appendix, *Overview Of The Accreditation Process*, which summarizes this process.)

I. Orientation and Initiating the Accreditation

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) conducts regional and local orientation meetings to acquaint staff of early childhood education programs with the accreditation process. The programs which have requested materials from the MSDE Early Childhood Accreditation Project and others interested in learning more about it are invited to the orientation meetings:

Participants who attend these orientation meetings will:

- Receive an overview of the guidelines regarding the self-appraisal and validation process.
- Gain an understanding of the *MSDE Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start.*
- Review the *Standards*' indicators from the document.
- Review best practices in early childhood education programs based on recent research and current literature.

? Receive information about the first steps of initiating the accreditation process.

It is suggested that the Director of the early childhood program should identify a support team for each program site to attend the orientation sessions.

The Director of the early childhood program may identify a contact person (e.g., education supervisor) as his/her designated contact for MSDE. The orientation will stress the responsibilities of the program director/designee to ensure that all staff members are regularly informed about any technical assistance support provided by MSDE. In addition to so-called pre-validation visits, MSDE will provide technical assistance meetings with individual programs, on-line support and solutions, and mini-grants for the purchase of supplies and materials.

The Director/designee will submit the following information to MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project as part of the Early Childhood Education Accreditation Application:

? Starting date for the self-appraisal process and anticipated completion date of accreditation.
(Note that the accreditation has to be completed within two years)

? Names and titles of the members comprising each site team conducting the self-appraisal and validation.

? Closing dates for submission of the self-appraisal instrument, *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start.*

II. Implementing the Self-Appraisal Process

The self-appraisal process begins when the program identifies the self-appraisal team. Each program identifies its self-appraisal team before it submits its application to MSDE. Membership should include the teaching/senior staff, the assistant or aide, the early childhood supervisor or designee (if applicable), a parent representative, and others who have a vested interest in the well-being of children at the center. All members of the self-appraisal team have equal status concerning the rating of the program's quality.

Each self-appraisal team member uses the indicators found in the instrument of self-appraisal and validation of the *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start* and will rate the program based on each standard and indicator. The rating scale is described in the section entitled "Rating System."

Prior to starting the self-appraisal, all team members should become familiar with the three documents of the *Standards*. The *Guide to Accreditation* provides directions on how to proceed with the accreditation. The *Instrument to Self-Appraisal and Validation* is used to rate the program. The *Manual of Best Practices* describes each indicator in terms of practices which can be observed and documented.

These are the specific activities that are conducted during the self-appraisal:

? The teacher/senior staff and assistant/aide work together to rate the program. The teacher begins to collect the documentation. (Please refer to the Documentation by Indicator Chart below.)

? The remaining members of the self-appraisal team observe program activities in each of the learning environments designed for particular age groups (e.g., playrooms for infants and toddlers and classrooms for children aged three-to-five years). Two team members individually rate the program.

? The self-appraisal team meets and discusses the findings of the observations, reaching a consensus on a *common rating* for each standard and indicator *using one (1) self-appraisal instrument*. This instrument is then sent to MSDE for use by the validator(s) on the day of the validation.

Rating System

The self-appraisal team and the validator(s) observe and rate the program using the following ratings: Fully Met (F), Partially Met (P), Not Met (N).

As is shown in the following chart, the indicators for each standard are rated using a three-item scale. **"Not Met"** means there is insufficient, observable evidence for the indicator. **"Partially Met"** means there is some observable evidence or documentation for the indicator. **"Fully Met"** means the indicators can be matched with an abundance of observable evidence and documentation for the indicator.

	Not Met (N)	Partially Met (P)	Fully Met (F)
Program (P)			
Validator (V)			

Documentation By Indicator Chart

Supply items to document the indicators listed below. (The items will suffice in lieu of or as support for observation.)

Program Administration

1.1 Mission Statement

Indicator	Documentation
1.1.1 Planning	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program, monthly newsletter, parent handbook
1.1.2 Staff Development	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program, staff development plans
1.1.3 Implementation	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program, newsletters, curriculum guide
1.1.4 Evaluation	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program, program evaluation form

1.2 Program Personnel

Indicator	Documentation
1.2.1 Administration	Notes of conferences/meetings such as calendars, minutes and agendas
1.2.2 Supervision	Agendas from staff meetings, workshop seminars, informal and formal observations, available support and resource personnel. Program evaluation report
1.2.3 Implementation (Birth to Five)	Personnel records, staff roster with educational qualifications
1.1.4 Evaluation	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program, program evaluation form

1.3 Program Continuity

Indicator	Documentation
1.3.1 Curricula	Written integrated curriculum plan.
1.3.2 Instructional Strategies	Teacher plans, multi-cultured materials and supply checklists
1.3.3 Transition and Continuity of Service	Individual student transition plans or transition procedures.

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1.4 Program Accountability

Indicator	Documentation
1.4.1 Reporting	Minutes from program's staff meetings and all planning meetings, evaluation reports, most recent monitoring report by the Child Care or Head Start Administration
1.4.2 Future Planning	Program's evaluation plan, self-appraisal evaluation and strategies for program improvement

Program Operation

2.1 Learning Environment

Indicator	Documentation
2.1.6 Multicultural Education/Diversity	Sample lesson plans
2.1.7 Materials	Materials and supplies checklist
2.1.8 Furnishings and Equipment	Materials and supplies checklist

2.2 Curriculum

Indicator	Documentation
2.2.1 (b) – 2.2.2 (b)	Integrated curriculum
2.2.3 (b) – 2.2.10 (b)	Sample lesson plan
2.2.11	Materials and supplies checklist

2.3 Instruction

Indicator	Documentation
2.3.4 Learning Centers	Materials and supplies checklist Weekly learning center schedule

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2.4 Assessment

Indicator	Documentation
2.4.1 **Multiple Assessment Methods**	Parent conferences—tips and schedule, students' progress reports, developmental checklist, sample anecdotal records, language logs, home visit agenda, sample portfolios
2.4.2 **Documentation**	Parent conferences—tips and schedule, students' progress reports, developmental checklist, sample anecdotal records, language logs, home visit agenda, sample portfolios
2.4.3 **Instruction-Based Assessment**	Sample lesson plans and center activities, sample references
2.4.5 **Communication**	Parent conferences—tips and schedule, students' progress reports, referral checklist, home visit agenda
2.4.6 **Articulation**	Parent conference notes, parent communication notes

3.1 Partnership

Indicator	Documentation
3.1.1 **Communication**	Sample monthly newsletter, parent surveys, home/school folder, parent handbook, program's curriculum guide for children 3-5 years of age
3.1.2 **Awareness of Child Development**	Sample monthly newsletters, brochures
3.1.3 **Involvement**	Program improvement plan, meeting notes, parent newsletters, volunteer information
3.1.4 **Evaluation**	Parent survey, home visit agenda
3.1.5 **Resource and Referrals**	Sample monthly newsletters, resource and referral materials
3.1.6 **Collaboration**	Transition policies, transition forms

III. Improving the Program Based on Self-Appraisal

Program improvement begins when the self-appraisal team analyzes the results of its self-appraisal and identifies its program's strengths and needs.

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There is no hard and fast criterion for determining whether a standard is met at an acceptable level. Generally, most indicators have to be fully met in order for one to conclude that a quality standard is being met. Likewise, most standards have to be met in order for one to conclude that the program is of high quality. Beyond these two rules of thumb, decisions about levels of quality are left up to each self-appraisal team.

Once the self-appraisal team has analyzed and discussed the results of its self-appraisal, it decides which standards will have to be improved. It may expand its team to include new members who will assist in conducting the program improvement.

The program improvement plan consists of the following:

- a list of strategies for program improvement
- identification of support personnel and other resources
- time line for completion of program improvement

The team implements the program improvement plan within the designated timeline with the support of the identified staff and resources.

Any decision to improve the program has to take into account the following:

- Change is a collaborative process involving both the onsite program staff implementing the program and, if applicable, the program organization's central office that administers the program. Some standards require central office action and are outside the program site's control. Therefore, program sites and central office staff must work together to meet all standards to build a high quality program.

- Change requires time and realistic expectations. Not everything can be changed at once, nor can everything be changed overnight. Some things cannot realistically be changed at all. Meeting the standards does not require 100% compliance with all indicators. There is no such thing as a perfect program – only a program that is the best that it realistically can be.

The self-appraisal team reassesses the program within three months according to the established improvement plan to determine whether the standards and indicators are being met. Complete the *Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation*. Re-rate each indicator that was previously rated "Not Met" (N) or "Partially Met" (P) and is now considered "Fully Met" (F). Make certain that each indicator is matched with an abundance of observable evidence and documentation. Upon completion of the program improvement, the self-appraisal team decides whether to pursue the accreditation.*

[*Programs receiving state funds must *successfully complete* accreditation.]

IV. Initiating the Validation Process

In order to initiate the validation process, the self-appraisal team organizes the collected documentation to justify its program rating. (Refer to Documentation by Indicator chart for documentation needed to support each indicator on pages 9-11.)

Pre-validation Visit

Prior to validation, the self appraisal team may decide to invite an educational professional (e.g., a representative from an institution of higher education, an early childhood professional, or a representative from MSDE) to visit, observe the program, and review the documentation for possible program support. The role of the pre-validation visitor should be one of coaching the team for the validation visit. The pre-validation visit should be scheduled before the team submits its self-appraisal instrument. As a result of a pre-validation visit, the self-appraisal team may have to implement further program improvement. After the completion of the program improvement, the original completed self-appraisal document is sent to MSDE with a copy being retained at the program site.

Scheduling the Validation Visit

The program determines a date for the validation visit that is agreed to by members of MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project and the validator(s). MSDE will schedule the visit of the assigned validator(s) within thirty (30) days of receiving the self-appraisal instrument. Programs with more than 60 children will need to request one or more additional validator(s). The schedule below identifies the number of validators required in relation to the size of the program.

Number of Children	Number of Validators
0-60	1
61-120	2
121-240	3
241-360	4

Please contact MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project for programs with more than 360 children or for multi-site accreditations.

The school should send the following materials to MSDE when requesting a Validation Visit:

- Letter requesting validation
- Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation
- Program Improvement Plan
- Curriculum Overview
- Daily Schedule
- Directions to the program

V. Conducting the Validation Process

Validation is the external review in which the accuracy of a school's self-appraisal is verified. It consists of a one-day visit by an education professional with early childhood education experience who has been assigned by MSDE. State validators receive training in the

accreditation process. The training sessions for validators are scheduled quarterly by the MSDE Early Childhood Education Project. Validators do not evaluate the program. They verify the accuracy of a program's ratings on
its self-appraisal instrument by:

- ? Classroom observation lasting approximately 2 hours
- ? Review of written/printed documents
- ? Interview with senior staff and the director of the program and/or education supervisor
- ? Sharing of feedback with the senior staff and the program director and/or education supervisor (substitute(s) for the teaching staff should be provided to allow for this to take place).

Note: The organizational structure of the program (i.e., whether it is center-based child care or Head Start) determines whether the interview is scheduled with the director or with the education supervisor.

Day of Validation

The validation process gives a program the opportunity to have an outside early childhood education specialist confirm the quality of its early childhood education program. This can only happen if the visit is conducted in a spirit of openness and collegiality. Program staff should take their cues from the validator(s) and provide assistance when requested. Other guidelines for program staff are listed below:

- ? Notify all staff members about the visit before it occurs;
- ? Provide a quiet place where the validator(s) can review written documentation without interruption;
- ? Be prepared to provide additional documentation if it is available and is requested;
- ? Have personnel available to discuss and/or clarify information relevant to early childhood education;
- ? Refrain from observing the program in the company of the validator(s);
- ? Refrain from accompanying the validator(s) on his/her walk through the program unless asked to do so;
- ? To the greatest extent possible, accommodate the validator(s)' schedule(s) so that the schedules of relevant staff conform to them.

The Validator's Day

The activities of a typical day of validation are tightly scheduled. The chart below entitled **"The Validation Day Visit Sample Time Line"** provides a general idea of how the validator(s) may proceed. The validator arrives at 7:30 a.m. or 30 minutes prior to the opening of the day and leaves at approximately 4:30 p.m. During the day, (s)he observes the assigned classroom (or playroom for infants and toddlers), interviews the senior staff as well as the director and/or education supervisor, reviews documentation, and rates each indicator by using the original self-appraisal instrument of the program's self-appraisal team. The Validation Day Visit Time Line can be tailored to meet the needs of the individual program's schedule.

The Validation Day Visit Sample Time Line

Time	Validator's Activity
7:30 a.m.	**Arrival**. The validator meets the program staff, tours the program and provides the director with an overview of his/her plans for the day.
8:15 a.m.	Program observation in the first room.
10:15 a.m.	Review of documentation of first room.
10:45 a.m	Program observation in the second room.
12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Review of documentation of the second room
2:00 p.m.	Interview with the senior staff in order to obtain information about indicators that could not be rated through observation and or review of written documentation.
2:30 p.m.	Interview with the director and/or education supervisor to obtain information about indicators that could not be rated through observation and/or review of written documentation.
3:00 p.m.	Brief observation in both rooms to validate specific indicators.
3:30 p.m.	Completion of ratings using the *Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation*.
4:00 p.m.	Exit interview with the program director and/or education supervisor as well as with senior staff. Completion of the *Validation Visit Verification Form*.

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After the visit, the validator mails the program's self-appraisal instrument, including his/her ratings, to the office of MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project.

Validators' Ratings

During the validation visit, the validator rates the early learning program using the Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation, which was submitted by the school to MSDE's *Early Childhood Accreditation Project*. Differences in ratings between the self-appraisal and the validator(s)' appraisal, whether the validator(s)' ratings are higher or lower than those of the self-appraisal, are shared with the program director and/or education supervisor and the senior staff during the exit conference. The validator is required to provide both a written and oral rationale for his or her ratings. (S)he must record the director's or education supervisor's comments regarding the rationale or his/her rating. If any rating given to an indicator by a validator differs from the rating given to the same indicator by the self-appraisal team, this validator's rating must be supported by written comments on the Validation Visit Clarification of Ratings Chart.

Exit Conference

The exit conference is the final activity of the validation day. It is designed to allow the validator(s) to discuss any differences in ratings between the self-appraisal team and the validator(s). At the end of the exit conference, the validator(s) and program director or education supervisor complete the *Validation Visit Form*. This form is intended to ensure that each segment of the visit was conducted according to the procedures of the accreditation process. Once this form has been signed, the validity of the visit cannot be challenged. Therefore, the program director and/or education supervisor should read each section of the form carefully before signing it. The director/education supervisor should not put his/her initials next to any segment of the visit that did not take place as described in this document. Rather, (s)he should notify MSDE about his/her concerns within 24 hours.

VI. Receiving the Validation Decision

When the validation visit has ended, the validator(s) return to MSDE the program's original self-appraisal instrument, with his/her/their ratings added. The Accreditation Decision Committee determines if the program meets the state standards for early childhood education programs.

The Accreditation Decision Committee comprises three or more early childhood educators who have experience in administering or implementing early childhood education programs. The Accreditation Decision Committee uses its expertise when reviewing the ratings and comments provided by the program's self-appraisal team and by the validator(s) in order to make its decision. It weighs the program's ratings and comments against the validator(s)' ratings and comments in order to form a picture of how the critical elements of quality and the program as a whole are being implemented. It considers both the unique aspects of the program and the

program's overall impact as measured against quality standards. Written comments on the *Validation Visit Clarification of Rating Charts* are extremely useful in helping the committee add details before making the decision.

The **Accreditation Decision Committee** will use the following three questions to guide its decisions regarding whether the program has met the quality standards:

- ? Does the program offer sufficient evidence that all aspects of each indicator are met?
- ? Has the program met most or all of the indicators for each standard?
- ? Has the program met all of the nine quality standards?

Aside from these criteria, the Accreditation Decision Committee takes into account one major question:

- ? Has the program made progress between the team's self-appraisal and the validation visit as indicated by the self-appraisal team's and validator(s)' ratings?

The Accreditation Decision Committee decides on the quality of the early childhood education program. The three decisions and their implications are summarized below:

Decision 1: The early childhood education program meets the standards of quality as outlined in the *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start* if all ten standards have been met.

Implication: The early childhood education program is accredited for a period of three years upon issuance of the accreditation certificate.

Decision 2: The early childhood education program meets many, but not all, of the standards of quality as outlined in the *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start.* Its certification is conditional pending the implementation of the program improvement as outlined by the Accreditation Decision Committee.

Implication: The early childhood education program has time, not to exceed one year, to rectify the area(s) of concern. Accreditation is formally awarded when an MSDE specialist verifies that the area(s) of concern have been rectified. Any early childhood education program that does not rectify the area(s) of concern or arrange for a visit by an MSDE specialist to verify program modifications within the period specified by the Accreditation Decision Committee will not receive a certificate of accreditation.

Decision 3: The early childhood education program meets few or none of the standards of quality as outlined in *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start.*

Implication: The program is not accredited. To receive accreditation the early childhood education program has the option to repeat the process beginning with self-appraisal. During

the program improvement stage, the self-appraisal team should develop a new program improvement plan to address the program weaknesses that resulted in non-accreditation.

The Accreditation Decision Committee meets within thirty (30) days of a program's validation visit. An early childhood education program is notified of the committee's decision within sixty (60) days of its validation visit. The early childhood education program is accredited for three years upon the issuance of the accreditation certificate.

Accreditation enables early childhood education programs to receive recognition for their hard work and commitment to excellence in providing quality programs for young children. An accredited program may be eligible for state funds. The MSDE Early Childhood Accreditation Project will notify the media and the Maryland Child Care Resource Network about any accredited program. Accredited programs and senior staff working in accredited programs will receive certificates of recognition from MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project.

VII. APPENDIX

OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITATION

Self-Appraisal Process

Center-Based Child Care and Head Start programs – voluntary*

Validation Process

Center-Based Child Care and Head Start programs – voluntary*

[*All programs receiving state funds *must successfully complete both* the self-appraisal and validation processes.]

I. Initiating the Orientation

A. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will conduct:

? Regional orientation meetings

B. Directors and /or Education Supervisors will:

? Inform all center-based child care and Head Start program staff regarding the self-appraisal and validation process;
? Identify contact person to work with MSDE regarding the self-appraisal and validation process.

II. Implementing the Self-Appraisal Process

Director and/or Education Supervisor will:

A. Identify a Self-Appraisal Team

Team is composed of:

- Director
- Instructional Supervisor
- Teacher(s)/Senior staff
- Teacher assistant/Aide
- Parent(s)

B. Conduct self-appraisal of Center-based Child Care and Head Start programs using the *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs: Center-based Child Care and Head Start* Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation.

III. Improving the Program Based on Self-Appraisal

The Team will:

A. Determine which standards have been met or not met.

B. Analyze the results of the self-appraisal to identify program strengths and needs.

C. Establish timelines for program improvement.

D. Expand team, if necessary, to meet the goals of the program improvement.

E. Programs devise and complete program improvement chart including:

- Objectives
- Strategies
- Resources
- Timeline

F. Implement strategies for program improvement.

G. Reassess program within three months of initiation of program improvement.

H. Complete the *Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation*. Re-rate each indicator that was previously rated "Not Met" (N) or "Partially Met" (P) and is now considered "Fully Met" (F). Make certain that each indicator is matched with an abundance of observable evidence and documentation.

IV. Initiating the Validation Process

The Self-Appraisal Team will:

A. Determine whether or not to pursue the validation process.

B. Implement the validation process by:

? Organizing documentation to justify program ratings.

? Sending to MSDE:
  - Letter requesting validation
  - Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation
  - Program Improvement Plan
  - Curriculum Overview
  - Daily Schedule
  - Directions

? Inviting early learning consultants to observe, review, and provide program support as part of an optional pre-validation visit.
? Scheduling a validation visit date.

V. Conducting the Validation Process

The Validator will:

A. Verify the accuracy of the program's self-appraisal.

B. Share the results with the director or education supervisor and the teacher/senior staff.

C. Incorporate the director or education supervisor and the teacher/senior staff comments into the written report.

D. Sign the Validation Visit Verification Form with the director/designee.

VI. Receiving the Validation Decision

MSDE will:

A. Convene a Validation Decision Committee within thirty (30) days of the validation visit to reach one of the three following decisions:

? Meets all nine standards. The program is validated for three years.
? Meets many, but not all standards. The program is validated pending improvement according to identified standards within one year of receipt of the decision.
? Meets few or none of the standards. The program is not validated.

B. Notify the program of the committee's decision within sixty (60) days of the validation visit.

CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE AND HEAD START
MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VALIDATION VISIT VERIFICATION FORM

School or Program_____ **County**_____ **Date of Visit**_____

Directions: The director or education supervisor and validator(s) initial each procedure listed below to verify that it was properly followed. At the end of the visit, the director or education supervisor and validator(s) sign the form verifying that all procedures were properly followed.

VALIDATION	**PROCEDURE PROPERLY FOLLOWED**	
	Director	**Validator(s)**
The validator met with the director or education supervisor to review the validation tasks and his or her plans for the day.	_____	_____
The validator observed those areas of the program in which activities are provided for Center-based child care or Head Start students.	_____	_____
The validator's center based child care or Head Start program observation was at least 2 hours.	_____	_____
The validator was provided with written documentation necessary to rate indicators, in all standards categories.	_____	_____
The validator reviewed written documentation.	_____	_____
The validator verified ratings for the program continuity standard by walking through other classrooms or programs, reviewing written documentation and interviewing the director.	_____	_____
The validator and/or director or education supervisor provided a written justification or rationale for each rated "Not Met."	_____	_____
The director or education supervisor reviewed the validator's written record of his/her comments.	_____	_____

_____ _____

Signature of Director or Education Supervisor/Date

Signature of Validator(s)/Date

(return to MSDE within 3 days)

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VALIDATION VISIT CLARIFICATION OF RATINGS CHAR

Directions: This form is to be completed by the validator prior to the exit conference if there are differenc and validator's ratings. The validator shares this form with the program staff during the exit conference and for the program to justify the difference in its rating. The validator records the program's comments. At the the validator and director and/or educational supervisor sign the form.

Signature of Validator(s)/Date _____

Signature of Director and/or Educational Supervisor/Date _____

Standard/ Indicator	Representative Example	Rating				
		P	N	P	F	P
		V				V
		P	N	P	F	P
		V				V
		P	N	P	F	P
		V				V
		P	N	P	F	P
		V				V

P = program **V = validator**

STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTING QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS: CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **If an organization has more than one program, are all programs required to go through the accreditation process?**

  No. The accreditation process is voluntary. The accreditation process refers to an individual program site, not to the entire organization.

- **If an organization has child care for infants and toddlers as well as preschool age children, will both program components have to participate in the accreditation process?**

  Yes. If both programs are housed in the same location, they will have to participate in the accreditation process at the same time.

- **If there is a change in the Director and/or Educational Supervisor of a program during the accreditation process, will the process continue?**

  Yes. The program should immediately notify MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project. The self-appraisal process may continue. The new Director and/or Educational Supervisor should become familiar with the accreditation process.

- **How long is the accreditation valid?**

  Once the accreditation is awarded it is valid for 3 years from the issuing date.

- **Can a program be granted a time extension to satisfactorily meet all accreditation Standards?**

  Yes. Programs that do not initially receive accreditation may receive it later pending the implementation of the program improvement within one year.

- **Can a program be granted a time extension beyond the 2 years of completion?**

  No. The program has 2 years to complete program accreditation.

- **Is the accreditation process mandatory?**

  No. The accreditation process is voluntary.

- **Do programs have to pay a fee for the state's accreditation process?**

  No. There is not a fee attached to the state's accreditation process. However, national associations will charge fees for accreditation.

- **What are the benefits of a program going through the accreditation process?**

  Among the benefits are eligibility for specific state funds, program improvement, improved customer satisfaction, professional growth among staff, and public recognition as a quality program.

- **Can validator(s)' decisions be appealed?**

  No. The director of the program will have the opportunity to comment on the validator(s)' ratings during the exit conference of the validation day.

VIII. Glossary

Accreditation	The process of successfully completing self-appraisal, quality improvement, and validation of an early childhood education program.
Application for accreditation	The request by an early childhood education program to initiate the self-appraisal and validation of its program.
Assessment (Performance-based)	Documentation and evaluation of children's skills, knowledge, behavior and accomplishments across a wide variety of curriculum areas for the purpose of supporting teaching and learning.
Associate of Arts Degree (A.A. Degree)	Completed degree at a community college.
Authentic learning	Providing materials and learning experiences which represent real life experiences.
Child Find	Child Find is an organization that serves as the entry point for referrals to local school systems for children beginning at age three who may be in need of special education services.
Collaboration	Continued planning and implementation of activities among a variety of stakeholders with vested interests in the well-being and learning of young children.
Continuity of service/transition	The continuance of services that support children's social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and cognitive development when a child advances to another level or transfers to a different early childhood education program.
Developmentally appropriate practices	Refers to instructional practices of a professional which are based on an understanding of: ? Age-related human characteristics that permit general predictions within an age range; ? How to respond effectively to the strengths, interests, and needs of individual children; ? The social and cultural contexts in which children live to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and research-based.
Documentation	Printed materials which verify specific activities or ideas related to the program standards and indicators.

Emergent literacy	Emerging and prerequisite skills related to reading and writing such as recalling a story from memory, connecting a letter's sound with its graphic representation, awareness of letter sounds, syllables, and invented spelling.
Exit conference	The meeting at the end of the validation visit between the validator and the director/education supervisor of the program to discuss the visit, review comments, and record any differences in ratings between the self-appraisal team and the validator(s)'. The *Validation Visit Form* is signed at this time by the validator and the director/education supervisor.
Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program	The Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program is a statewide interagency early intervention system for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Local Infants and Toddlers Programs, composed of local school systems, health departments, departments of social services, and other public and private providers identified by each jurisdiction, deliver services to children with disabilities from birth to age three and to their families. Local single points of entry have been established in all jurisdictions to accept referrals from parents, physicians, hospitals, and others who suspect that an infant or toddler may be in need of early intervention services.
Philosophy	Description of a set of values or beliefs related to an early childhood education program's mission or goals.
Rating	A system used in the self-appraisal and validation to determine the level of quality as defined by the standards' indicators using a scale of *fully met* (F), *partially met* (P), or *not met* (P).
Self-appraisal	A process whereby a team composed of teachers, administrators, parents, and others evaluates the level of quality of an early childhood program using the *Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation*. The self-appraisal is designed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a program and to provide the basis for quality improvement for those indicators that have not been fully met.
Validation	The external review of a program by a validator assigned by MSDE, in which the accuracy of the program's self-appraisal and subsequent quality improvement is verified using the *Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation*.

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STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTING QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Center-based Child Care and Head Start

Instrument for Self-Appraisal and Validation

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Instruction
Language Development and Early Learning Branch
September, 2000

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ED 439 630

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM INFORMATION FORM

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name of Organization_____ Supervisor/Director_____

Name of Program_____ Support person (if applicable)_____

Address_____ Telephone_____

_____ Fax_____

E-mail_____ Hours of operation _____AM to _____PM

II. PROGRAM OPERATION:

Number of Children enrolled _____

Age Range	Number of Children	Number of Adults	Number of Classes
Infants (birth-12 months)	_____	_____	_____
Toddlers (13-36 months)	_____	_____	_____
Preschoolers (3-4 years of age)	_____	_____	_____
Kindergartener (5 years of age)	_____	_____	_____

III. FUNDING SOURCE FOR OPERATION OF PROGRAM (check as many as apply)

† Federal † State † Local † Other (Specify)_____

IV. Name of person completing this form_____ Position_____

Note: This completed form must be submitted, along with the self-appraisal instrument and materials checklist, at least 30 days

prior to your accreditation visit.

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III. Home-School-Community Partnership

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Revised 9/14/00

The Rating System and Definition of the Rating Scale

Rating System:Self-Appraisal and Accreditation

The self-appraisal team and the validator(s) observe and rate the program using the following ratings: Fully Met (F), Partially Met (P), Not Met (N).

The following chart depicts that the indicators for each standard are rated using a three-item scale. ANot Met@ means that there is an insufficient, observable evidence for the indicator. APartially Met@ means that there is some observable evidence for the indicator. @Fully Met@ means that the indicators can be matched with an abundance of observable evidence of high quality.

Rating System

	Not Met (N)	Partially Met (P)	Fully Met (F)
Program (P)			
Validator (V)			

I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Mission Statement

Philosophy/Mission Statement

1.1 The early childhood education program's philosophy is consistent with early childhood practices that are age and developmentally appropriate. The written mission/philosophy statement for the early childhood program is used by the staff as the foundation for planning, staff development, evaluation and continuous improvement of the program

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
1.1.1 Planning **The early childhood education program has a written philosophy/mission statement, which reflects planned use of effective early childhood practices. The written philosophy/mission statement is shared with staff and families.** (NAEYC, B-1, B-2, C-1a) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(1)(I); 1304.51 (a)(1-3))	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program		P			
			V			
1.1.2 Staff Development **The early childhood education program mission/philosophy statement describes an ongoing staff development program to ensure opportunities for professional growth and development.** (NAEYC, D-3, D-4a, D-4b) (Head Start, 1304.52 (k) (1-4)	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program		P			
			V			
1.1.3 Implementation **The learning environment and activities are developmentally appropriate for children and reflect the program's philosophy and goals.** (NAEYC, B-1, B-2) (Head Start, 1034.51 (a) (1-3)	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program		P			
			V			
1.1.4 *Evaluation* **The philosophy/mission statement includes a process for ongoing documentation of the program's annual evaluation.** (NAEYC, E-1, J-1a-f, J-3) (Head Start, 1304.51 (I)(1-3)	Written mission/policy statements of the early childhood program		P			
			V			

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Program Personnel

1.2 The early childhood education program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified staff.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
1.2.1 Administration **At least once each program year, the director or education supervisor communicate about the early childhood program to ensure the implementation of a developmentally appropriate program.** (NAEYC, E-6) (Head Start, 1304.51 (d))	Notes of conferences/meetings such as calendars, minutes and agendas		P			
			V			
1.2.2 Supervision **The supervisor and/or director provide feedback to the staff about the implementation of a developmentally appropriate program.** (NAEYC, E-9, E-10) (Head Start, 1304.51 (b)(e)(f)	Agendas from staff meetings, workshop seminars informal and formal observations, available support and resource personnel. Program evaluation report		P			
			V			
1.2.3 Implementation (Birth to Five) **Early Childhood senior staff, responsible for the care and education of a group of children from birth through age five, have an AA degree in early childhood education / child development or equivalent. Preferably staffs have baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education/child development. Aides working with senior staff meet Maryland Child Care licensing requirements.** (NAEYC, D1a-c, D-2ab) (Head Start, 1304.52 (d)(1); 1304.52 (G)(3)	Personnel records, educational qualifications		P			
			V			
1.2.4 Professional Space **The program has designated adequate space to meet staff needs.**	Staff restroom and lounge, lockers, cabinets to store personnel belongings, designated conference/meeting areas		P			
			V			

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Program Continuity

1.3 The early childhood education program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies, which ensure continuity of learning and child growth and development for all children.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
1.3.1 Curricula **The program has written curriculum plans, based on the knowledge of child development and assessment of individual needs and interests.** (NAEYC, B-2, B-3ab) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(1)(i-ii)	Written integrated curriculum plan		P			
			V			
1.3.2 Instructional Strategies **The program provides developmentally appropriate activities and materials that are selected to emphasize concrete experiential learning.** (NAEYC, B-5, B-7)	teacher plans, developmentally appropriate and multicultured materials and equipment		P			
			V			
1.3.3 Articulation & Continuity **Staff from the early childhood education program and staff from public school communicate children's progress in terms of MSDE's early childhood assessment system.** (NAEYC, C-8b) (Head Start, 1304.41 (c)(2)	Individual student transition plans		P			
			V			

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Program Accountability

1.4 The school improvement team uses the results of the ongoing evaluation of the early learning program in planning for overall school improvement.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
1.4.1 Reporting **The results of the self-appraisal or program review are kept on site and reported to the governing body of the early childhood program.** (NAEYC, E-6, J-2) (Head Start, 1034.51 (i)(1); 1034.51 (h)(1)	Minutes from programs staff and all planning meetings. Most recent monitoring report by the Child Care or Head Start administrator		P			
			V			
1.4.2 Future Planning **The results of the program self-appraisal are used to plan for program improvement.** (NAEYC, E-6, J-2) (Head Start, 1304.50 (g)(1)(2))	Program's evaluation plan, self-appraisal evaluation and strategies for program improvement		P			
			V			

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II. PROGRAM OPERATION

Environment

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING	N	P	F
2.1.1 Safety-Learning Environment **The learning environment is free from objects and materials that are harmful. The program must comply with the Maryland State Child Care Licensing Regulations, zoning requirements, fire, health and safety regulations.** (NAEYC, G-1, H-15, H-20, H-18) (Head Start, 1034.22 (d)(1)(2); 1034.53 (a)(1)(4)(5)(6)(7)(9)(10)	Clean, well-lighted, well ventilated, free of clutter, appropriate storage of hazardous materials, covered electrical outlets		P			
			V			
2.1.2 *Safety-Materials* **Materials and furnishings meet standards for safety, size, durability, toxicity, and construction.** (NAEYC, G-4,H-15, H-19, H-6) (Head Start, 1304.53 (a)(7)(8)(10)	Furniture in good repair. Toilets and sinks are easily accessible. Materials are clean, in good condition and designed for use – in group setting. Flammable/dangerous materials and medications are only accessible to adults		P			
			V			
2.1.3 Supervision **Children are under adult supervision at all times.** (NAEYC, F-1, F-2) (Head Start, 1306.32, 1304.52(g)(4)	Ratio of adults to children to meet the Maryland State Child Care Licensing Regulations. Groups of children are age determined or multiage		P			
			V			
2.1.4 Sanitation **Surfaces and materials are cleaned regularly with antibacterial and bleaching solution.** (NAEYC, A-5, H-13, H-17) (Head Start, 1304.53 (a)(10)(viii)(xiv)(xvi)	Bleach and water solution, antibacterial soaps/solutions. Toilets and handwashing facilities are well supplied, clean, and in good repair. Separate toileting and diapering area		P			
			V			

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Environment

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	*RATING*			
2.1.5 Space **The learning environment is arranged to accommodate flexibility and children's movement. Space allows children to work in large groups, small groups, and independently. Space is arranged to facilitate a variety of activities for each age group and meet Maryland State Child Care Licensing Regulations.** (NAEYC, G-2, G-3, G-6, G-7) (Head Start, 1304.53 (a)(1-6); 1304.21 (a)(5)(i-iii)	Arrangement of learning center or: dramatic play, blocks, art, literature, sand/water, manipulatives, music, science; clutter-free utilization of available space; space available for movement from center to center and to and from large and small group areas		*P*			
			V			
2.1.6 Multicultural Education/Diversity **The learning environment supports and respects gender, culture, language, race, ethnicity and family composition.** (NAEYC, B-3ab, B-5, A-3, A-4, A-8) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(1)(ii)(iii); (10)(xviii) 1304.53 (b); (1)(2)(3)	Books, posters, dolls, displays, clothing, music, photographs depicting cultural diversity, materials available in other languages Evidence of planning for multiple intelligences, different modalities, as well as cultural and gender differences; large print for visually impaired, wheel-chair accessibility		*P*			
			V			
2.1.7 Materials **Staff provides a variety of developmentally and age appropriate activities and materials that are selected to emphasize concrete learning experiences.** (NAEYC, B-5, B-6ab, B-7) (Head Start, 1304.53 (b)(1)(i-vii)	See: Learning Centers Materials and Supplies Checklist (for programs serving age 3-5 years of Age)		*P*			
			V			

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Environment

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	*RATING*			
				N	P	F
2.1.8 Furnishings and Equipment **Equipment and furniture have a direct impact upon the development of children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills. Furniture and equipment are matched to the developmental level, interests, temperaments, and learning styles of children.** (NAEYC, G-4, G-5) (Head Start, 1304.53 (a)(1)	Flexible, multi-purpose use; primarily open-ended materials for exploration; writing tools; literature in learning centers Tubs, trays, bins, baskets, shelves, boxes and other storage materials that are clearly visible, accessible, and labeled		*P*			
	Individual children storage space, diaper changing tables, safe cribs, cots or mats		*V*			

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Care and Learning Opportunities – Infants and Toddlers (Birth-3 Years of Age)

2.2(a) Each early childhood education program has research has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.2.1 (a) Emotional Security **Staff helps infants and toddlers develop positive and secure relationships.** (NAEYC, B-7a, B-7b) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(iv)	Staff constantly attends to the needs of infants and toddlers		P			
			V			
2.2.2 *(a) Sensory and Cognitive Development* **Each child is provided the opportunity to explore a variety of sensory and cognitive experiences with support and stimulation from the staff.** (NAEYC, B-7e) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(5)(i)(ii)	Ample space, equipment and adult supervision provided as infants/toddlers explore		P			
			V			
2.2.3*(a) Communication Skills* **Staff supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express him or herself freely.** (NAEYC, B-7d, A-3b) (Head Start, 1034.21 (a)(4)(iii)	A variety of songs, stories, book and games are provided to encourage language development and conversation		P			
			V			
2.2.4 *(a) Gross Motor Development* **Staff supports the development of physical skills of infants and toddlers including gross motor skills such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing.** (NAEYC, B-7e) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(5)(i); 1304.21 (a)(3)(ii))	Indoor and outdoor area is provided for gross motor development Low sturdy furniture Padded and safe play structures		P			
			V			

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Care and Learning Opportunities – Infants and Toddlers (Birth-3 Years of Age)

2.2(a) Each early childhood education program has research has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's *development.*

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.2.5 (a) Fine Motor Development **Staff supports the development of physical skills of infants and toddlers including fine motor development that encourage the control and specialized motions, using eyes, mouth, hands, and feet.** (NAEYC, B-7e), (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(5)(ii)	Opportunities for infants/toddlers to grasp, reach, pull up, use hands, stack, release objects, feed self finger food, and use a spoon Objects for toddlers to carry small objects, simple puzzles, nesting and stacking toys.		P			
			V			
2.2.6(a) Adult/Child Interactions – Emotional Well-being **Staff interacts frequently with infants and toddlers showing affection, interest, and respect.** (NAEYC, A-1, A-3a, A-4a); (NAEYC, A-2, A-3a) (Head Start, 1304.21 (b)(2)(ii)); (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(4)(iii))	Non-verbal interactions, positive facial expressions, gestures, touching, holding and positive body language		P			
			V			
2.2.7 (a) Adult Interactions - Communication **Staff talks with individual children and encourages children of all ages to use language.** (NAEYC, A-1, A-3b) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(4)(iii); 1304.21 (b)(2)(ii)	Infants sounds are repeated Descriptive language and behaviors are used		P			
			V			
2.2.8 (a) Adult Interactions – Disposition Toward Learning **Staff encourages development of independent functioning, positive interaction with others, feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning.** (NAEYC, A-5) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(vi)	Safe place for independent play Older infants feed self Children engage in independent activities		P			
			V			

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Curriculum (3-5 Years of Age)

2.2(b) The early childhood education program's philosophy has a research-based curriculum that supports each child's development.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.2.1 (b) Content Integration **The content of the curriculum is integrated and appropriate for the age and individual development of the child, including meaningful concepts and experiences.** (NAEYC, B-4bd, B-5d) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(ii)(iii); 1304.21 (a)(4)(I)	Integrated curriculum		P			
			V			
2.2.2 (b) Goals and Learning Outcomes **The curriculum goals are integrated and appropriate for the age and individual development of the child, which include learning outcomes for language development, cognition and general knowledge, physical development, and social and emotional development.** (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)	Integrated curriculum		P			
			V			
2.2.3(b) Language Art: Reading **The language arts program is primarily based on the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Emphasis is on stimulating verbal interactions, developing vocabulary, encouraging children to talk about books, providing practice with the sound structure of words and developing the knowledge about print, including the production and recognition of letters.** (NAEYC, A-3b, B-7d) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(ii)(iii); 1304.21 (a)(4)(iv)	Reading to children, flannel boards, puppets, songs, finger plays, and rhyming games Labels are posted in the classroom, books, letters and word recognition learning activities		P			
			V			

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Curriculum (3-5 Years of Age)

2.2(b) The early childhood education program has a research-based curriculum that supports each child's development.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.2.4(b) Language Arts: Writing **The language arts program is primarily based on the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with concepts, books, and print. Writing is developmental and based on a process approach.** (NAEYC, B-7d) (Head Start, 1034.21 (c)(1)(ii) 1034.21 (a)(4)(iv)	Drawing, scribbles, stages of labeling and dictated stories		P			
			V			
2.2.5(b) Mathematics **The mathematics program is based on the exploration and development of mathematical concepts with the use of manipulatives. Learning experiences incorporate problem solving, communicating mathematically, reasoning and making connections to real life situations.** (NAEYC, B-7c) (Head Start, 1034.21 (a)(4)(iv)	Food experiences, science, games, puzzles, block numbers, concepts, and relationships, calculators, abacuses, and computers		P			
			V			
2.2.6(b) Science **The science program provides opportunities for children to engage in the processes of predicting, observing, investigating, gathering data, drawing conclusions, and making generalizations as they learn about their environment, others, and themselves.** (NAEYC, B-7c) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(ii)	Science investigation, observing, classifying, predicting, asking questions, recognizing patterns, using new information to solve a problem		P			
			V			

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Curriculum (3-5 Years of Age)

2.2(b) The early childhood education program has a research-based curriculum that supports each child's development.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.2.7(b) Social Studies **The Social Studies program provides opportunities for children to develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning more about their environment.** (NAEYC, B-7b, B-7h) (Head Start, 1034.21 (c)(1)(iv)(v)(vi)	Solving social conflicts, geographical awareness, cooperative learning, awareness of rights and responsibilities, and awareness of own and other cultures		P			
			V			
2.2.8(b) Fine Arts **The Fine Arts includes the visual and performing arts. The program provides opportunities for children to create, perform, and respond to quality arts experiences adapted to their developmental levels that reflect their own culture.** (NAEYC, B-7g) (Head Start, 1034.21 (a)(4)(ii)	Expose to and engagement with a variety of music; variety of props and materials to create art work, music/song, or drama, exploration of visual media		P			
			V			
2.2.9(b) Health Education **Health education integrates all educational aspects of the health, nutrition, and mental health services into program activities.** (NAEYC, B-7f) (Head Start, 1034.21 (c)(1)(iii)	Posting of pictures that communicate school/classroom bus and fire safety Emphasis on nutrition (e.g. nutritious snacks cooking activities, field trips, literature connections		P			
			V			
2.2.10(b) Physical Education **Physical education provides regular opportunities for each child to explore and develop gross and fine motor skills, eye-hand and eye-foot coordination, spatial awareness, and tracking abilities.** (NAEYC, B-7e) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(5)(i)(ii);1304.21 (a)(6)	Promotion of locomotor skills, eye-hand and eye-foot coordination, balance, gross motor activities (e.g., jumping, climbing, balancing, pedaling)		P			
			V			

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Curriculum (3-5 Years of Age) 2.2(b) The early childhood education program has a research-based curriculum that supports each child's development.						
INDICATORS	**REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES**	**PROGRAM EXAMPLES**	**RATING**			
2.2.11(b) Technology **Multiple opportunities for the use of technology in the classroom are integrated throughout the school day.** (NAEYC, B-6)	Childrens' individual use of tape recorders, overheads, language masters, record players, computers, VCRs, CD players, calculators, telephone, Internet		**P**	**N**	**P**	**F**
			V			

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Instruction – (3-5 Years of Age)
2.3 Instruction delivers curriculum through strategies that support each child's development

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.3.1 Grouping **Instruction is delivered within large and small groups, and one-on-one interactions.** (NAEYC, A-5, B-4b, B-4d) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(i)(vii)	Daily schedule which provide for individual and small group experiences, both indoors and outdoors Activities that enable children to develop emerging skills and practice existing ones, and that recognizes individual interest and learning styles. Children reflect on their learning		P			
			V			
2.3.2 Instructional Strategies-Cognition and General Knowledge **Instructional strategies provides for the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to organize his or her experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numeracy, reasoning, and decision making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success.** (NAEYC, A-8) (Head Start 1304.21. (c)(1)(ii)(vi)	Broad themes or topics relevant to young children's interest; instruction integrates concepts of curriculum into developmentally appropriate experiences; scaffolding; on-going assessment of children's strengths and needs		P			
			V			
2.3.3 Questioning/Problem Solving **Instructional strategies encourage children to think, reason, question, hypothesize, and solve problems.** (NAEYC, B-7c) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(ii); 1304.21 (a)(4)(i)	Higher level questions; think-pair-share techniques; cooperative learning strategies		P			
			V			
2.3.4 Learning Centers **Learning centers encourage and support children's exploration, experimentation, questioning, and problem solving.** (NAEYC, G-3) (Head Start, 1304.53 (a)(1)(3); 1304.53 (b)(1)(iv)	Materials that encourage open-ended thinking and active participation learning centers: literature, blocks, manipulatives, art, music, science, dramatic play		P			
			V			

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Instruction – (3-5 Years of Age)
2.3 Instruction delivers curriculum through strategies that support each child's development

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
2.3.5 Instructional Strategies – Approaches Toward Learning **Instruction is based upon children's individual needs, interests, strengths, and learning styles.** (NAEYC, G-6) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(i)	Shared reading; hands-on science; manipulative math; cooperative learning; language experience stories; paired writing Child progress is shared with family Daily routines provide for quite, active and reflection time		P			
			V			
2.3.6 Instructional Balance **Instructional strategies promote participation by children in staff guided and self-initiated activities. Every child is engaged in direct learning daily.** (NAEYC, B-8, B-4e) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(vii); 1304.21 (a)(1)(iv)	Teachers plans; teacher/assistant collaboration; daily schedule sufficient materials and manipulatives are provided for staff directed learning		P			
			V			
2.3.7 Authentic Learning **Instruction relates in a meaningful way to children's real life experiences.** (Head Start, 1304.53 (b)(1)(ii)	Text-to-life experiences; true to life math problems, if-then science problems; accessing prior knowledge		P			
			V			
2.3.8 Multicultural Education/Diversity **Instruction addresses and respects cultural diversity, learning styles, and other individual differences.** (NAEYC, A-4ab, B-5a, B-7a) (Head Start, 1304.21 (a)(5)(iii) 1304.53 (b)(1)(ii)(iii) 1304.53 (a)(3)(i)(E)	Authentic representation of cultures: people, illustrations, literature, props, music, and posters people with disabilities		P			
			V			

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Instruction – (3-5 Years of Age)

2.3 Instruction delivers curriculum through strategies that support each child's development

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
2.3.9 Instructional Management **Instruction incorporates management strategies that facilitate logical and organized transitions.** (NAEYC, A-6a, A-7, A-8a, B-9, B-10, B-11) (Head Start, 1034.21 (a)(3)(ii) 1034.21 (a)(3)(i)(A)(B)(C)	Signals that refer to routinized cues such as use of lights, repeated cues, symbols, musical cues, sign language Trays and bins for materials are clearly labeled for self-directed clean-up		P			
			V			
2.3.10. Social Interaction **Instruction promotes opportunities for success to help develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning.** (NAEYC, A-6a, A-10, A-9, B-11) (Head Start, 1034.21(c)(1)(iv)(v)(vi)	Clear, consistent and fair limits behavior expectations have been established and are practiced. Children take turns, talk to solve problems, and have concerns for others Small group interaction such as paired learning and role play		P			
			V			

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Assessment

2.4 Assessment of young children is multi-dimensional, developmentally appropriate, and ongoing. Assessment data is used to facilitate learning.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
2.4.1 Multiple Assessment Methods **Multiple assessment methods are used to identify children's strengths, needs, interests, and progress.** (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(2) 1304.51 (g)	Portfolios; developmental checklists; anecdotal records; running records; language logs; ongoing observation notes, goals set by staff and families for student achievement		P			
			V			
2.4.2 Documentation **Information about all areas of the child's development and progress are systematically collected and documented throughout the year.** (NAEYC J-3) (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(2) 1304.20 (b)(3)(3)	Anecdotal records, checklists, observations, work samples, and logs		P			
			V			
2.4.3 Instruction-Based Assessment **Assessment is an integral part of daily planning and instruction.** (Head Start, 1304.21 (c)(1)(i)	Weekly plans for individual and small group instruction		P			
			V			
2.4.4 Communication **Staff and families share assessment information and child's growth on a regular basis.** (NAEYC, J-3) (Head Start, 1304.51 (c)(1)(2) 1304.21 (a)(2)(i) 1304.20 (c)(1)(2)	Parent conferences and teacher collaboration Students visit subsequent grades by the end of the school year		P			
			V			
2.4.5 Articulation **Assessment data is shared with families and relevant staffs in order to communicate progress and plan for instruction.** (Head Start, 1304.20 (f)(2)(iii) 1304.41 (c)(1)(iii)	Family outreach activities: Telephone calls, electronic communications, newsletters, parent meetings and conferences; home visits; materials are available in other languages		P			
			V			

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III. HOME-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Partnership

3.1 Families and community partnerships support the early childhood education program.

INDICATORS	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES	PROGRAM EXAMPLES	RATING			
				N	P	F
3.1.1 Communication **Information about the early childhood education program is shared with families on an ongoing basis, as a part of collaborative partnership building with families to allow for family input.** (NAEYC, C-1a, C-2, C-5a, C-5b, C-6, C-7) (Head Start, 1304.40 (a)(1) 1304.40 (e)(5)	Family outreach activities: Telephone calls, electronic communications, newsletters, parent meetings and conferences; home visits; materials are available in other languages		P			
			V			
3.1.2 Awareness of Child Development **Families, community members, and staff collaborate to promote an increased awareness of the stages of child growth and development.** (NAEYC, C-3a, C-3b) (Head Start, 1304.40 (e)(1)(3) 1304.40 (e)(4)(i)	Newsletters; brochures; displays; workshops; internet websites; community resource people and experts		P			
			V			
3.1.3 Involvement **Families, community members, and staff are actively involved in activities and decision-making.** (NAEYC, C-4a, C-4b) (Head Start, 1304.40 (d)(2)(3) 1304.40 (a)(4)(5)	Classroom visitation, participation, volunteer help are encouraged Program improvement team		P			
			V			
3.1.4 Evaluation **Family and community members are encouraged to provide input regarding the early childhood education program.** (NAEYC, J-2a) (Head Start, 1304.40 (b)(2)	Annual program evaluation, self-assessment evaluation		P			
			V			
INDICATORS	**REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES**	**PROGRAM EXAMPLES**	**RATING**			

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Partnership 3.1 **Families and community partnerships support the early childhood education program.**						
3.1.5 Resource and Referrals **Information and referral for services addressing issues in the physical or cognitive, or emotional domain is provided to families.** (NAEYC, E-9) (Head Start, 1304.40 (e)(4)(ii) 1304.40 (g)(1)(ii) 1304.40 (b)(1) 1304.40 (b)(1)(ii-iii) 1304.40 (g)(1)(2)	Nutrition, health, and community service information Referral procedure for students with special needs Brochures about Maryland's Resource and Referral Network, extended day programs, before and after school care programs		P V	N	P	F
3.1.6 Collaboration **Collaboration exists among community agencies, the early childhood education program, the elementary school, and families.** (NAEYC, C-8a) (Head Start, 1304.40 (h) 1304.41 (c)(1) 1304.40 (f)(4)(i-iii) 1304.40 (h)(1)(1)-(4)	Established transition policies between early care and public school, extended day, school age child care ("wrap around" programs), Title I, EIIP, Child Find, prekindergarten, kindergarten, and/or first grade and, joint staff development programs		P V			

Please use the space below to make general comments/justifications regarding the Self-Appraisal and/or Validation process.

General Comments (Self Appraisal Team:)

General Comments (Validator):_____

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